



Abba Lord Holton, of San Francisco, has devoted her life and fortune to the cause of proportional representation at the polls. She publishes a paper called Hope and Home, which advocates the Hare ballot, giving to all voters a preferential choice of candidates in proportion to the number of votes cast. This system is used by the Mechanics' Institute of San Francisco in electing trustees, and a similar method of voting is practiced in three cantons of Switzerland.

Mrs. Holton has corresponded with Sir John Lubbock, M. P., Professor Naville, of Switzerland, and other noted political men, who believe that her little paper



ABBA LORD HOLTON.

has a mission to perform in educating the masses to realize that they are not properly represented at the polls by the present system of ballot counting. She has written a monograph on the constitution of the United States, which is remarkable as the work of a woman. She regards her line of action as directly marked out for her by Providence, and thinks that women ought to study the Hare method of representation that they may demand it when suffrage is extended to them.

ALBERT BOSCHKE DEAD.

By the Associated Press.

SAN FRANCISCO, Mar. 30.—Albert Boschke, a noted engineer and harbor map expert, is dead in Oakland. Boschke's best engineering feats were the remodeling of the harbor front of New York in the early 50's; the planning and building of Boston's harbor improvements in 1860-68; the construction of the land defenses of the city of Washington during the Civil war, and a map which Abraham Lincoln asserted saved the capital from the Confederates, and the laying out of Oakland's harbor in 1860.

He was born in Poland in 1823, and was of noble parentage. For more than forty years Boschke was in the employ of the United States engineering department, coming to the Pacific coast in 1868. His crowning achievement was the building of a wheel-dredger, which only last Thursday was given its final and successful test. He is survived by three sons and two daughters.

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OPEN CONTEST IN BOSCHKE ESTATE

Widow Joins Children in Statement That Daughter Lacks Integrity

OAKLAND, April 18.— Accusing his sister, Dr. A. L. Astor, of "*want of understanding and want of Integrity*," George W. Boschke today asked the court not to appoint her executrix of the will of his late father, Albert Boschke, a pioneer civil engineer, who had much to do with the development of Oakland harbor. Boschke also opposes the appointment of H. W. Hutton as Joint executor with Mrs. Astor, alleging that he is improvident.

The Boschke estate consists almost entirely of shares of stock of companies organized to exploit Boschke's inventions, most of which are concerned with dredgers. The value of the estate is problematical.

All of the children of the deceased, as well as his widow, join in the opposition to Mrs. Astor, and their signatures to that effect were filed today. The contestants are Mrs. Martha E. Boschke, the widow; George W., Albert L. and Guy Boschke, sons, and Mrs. Ida M. Bergman, a daughter.

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CONTEST PROVISIONS OF LATE SAN JOSEAN'S WILL

Son of Late General Albert Boschke Seeks to Depose Sister as Executrix.

Engineer Left Large Estate and Valuable Patents on Dredger Devices.

ALAMEDA Apr. 21. -- Opposition to the appointment of Mrs. A. L. Astor and H. W. Hutton as executors of the will of the late Albert Boschke, who was well-known about San Jose and Santa Clara county several years ago as General Boschke through his work in the interests of a reclamation project for the tide lands of Alviso, has been presented in the Superior Court of Alameda County by George W. Boschke, a son. In his opposition young Boschke charges Mrs. Astor, who is his sister, and Hutton, with being "*improvident*." Mrs. Astor and Hutton are named in Boschke's will for the places young Boschke seeks to prevent them from gaining. Albert Boschke was a well-known engineer, having been for many years connected with the War Department and having done some of the largest Government harbor work. His estate is worth anywhere from \$10,000 to a quarter of a million dollars, the smaller figure being tangible assets which may be vastly increased through the sale of patents of inventions made by the late engineer. Included is a dredger of which a large working model for some years has laid in the Oakland estuary.

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SKELETONS CROP OUT IN CONTEST

Children of Late Albert Boschke Deny Mrs. Astor Is His Daughter

OAKLAND, May 3 -- Family skeletons in numbers are being dragged out of their closets in the trial of the contest over the estate of the late Albert Boschke, once a prominent civil engineer and an inventor of note. Some of them saw the light today in Judge Wells' court and others are promised.

The central figure in the contest is Dr. Abby L. Astor, who says she is Boschke's daughter. His other children say she is not. Boschke's will speaks of her as daughter and makes her executrix. Letters written by Boschke that have come out in evidence speak of her as a friend and not a relative. She is 57 years old and much the senior of the other children, George W., Albert L. and Benjamin F. Boschke and Mrs. Ida May Bergmann, all of whom are opposing her claim to handle the estate.

The estate has a problematical value. Attorney H. W. Hutton, who was named with Mrs. Astor as executor of the will, testified today that it was probably worth \$50,000. It consists chiefly of patent rights in dredging machines and of stock in companies organized to develop improvements in dredgers made by Boschke.

Doctor Astor was the target for several hours cross examination at the hands of Attorneys J. B. Richardson and E. S. Page today. She said that her first memories of Boschke were in Macon, Ga., at his mother's home, when she was a little girl. She always understood that she was his daughter. She could not remember her mother, she said, and knew nothing of her. She also admitted that in 1891 she lived in Alameda in his household under the name of Abby L. Holton. She explained this by saying that Boschke had remarried and she did not wish his new wife to know that he had a daughter. Page asked her if it was not a fact that she was the daughter of Samuel R. and Esther M. Lord, which she denied.

Reinhold Hesse, a civil engineer who was associated with Boschke and who is vice president of one of the companies that is handling his patent dredger, gave testimony as follows concerning Mrs. Astor:

"She is the biggest and fastest liar I have ever met. She would rather lie than tell the truth."

He said she had stolen papers from him and had assaulted him with a dagger. He also testified that he had seen her threaten Boschke with a pistol.

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STOCKTON EVENING MAIL. Wednesday, 4 May 1910, Page 6, Column 1

DENY CLAIM OF BOSCHKE'S "DAUGHTER"

Engineer's Widow and Children Say She's an Adventuress. Her Strange Story.

OAKLAND, May 4. The widow and children of the late Albert Boschke, the man whose brilliant brain conceived the plans for New York harbor and whose ability caused the United States War Department to give him charge of navigable waters on the Pacific coast, have set about trying to prove that Mrs. A. L. Astor, named as a daughter in Boschke's will is not his daughter, but a clairvoyant and adventuress who in some manner succeeded in gaining an ascendancy over the engineer, even to the extent of impelling him to denominate her as an heir.

Their charges came before Judge Wells yesterday in the form of opposition to the appointment of Mrs. Astor and W. H. Hutton as executors of Boschke's will, for which position the testament nominated them.

Mrs. Astor was one of the first witnesses called. She is 57 years old, and declared that she knew Boschke as her father only because he had told her she was his child; that she had never seen her mother within her memory, and that she first remembered Boschke when she was a little girl and he came to the home of her grandmother in Macon, Georgia, where she was living.

A record claimed to be in her handwriting, giving her name as Esther Abba Lord, the names of her parents as Samuel R. and Esther Morrell Lord, and the place of her birth as Buxton, Maine, was shown her, but she denied any knowledge whether these persons were her real parents.

She admitted living at the home of Boschke in Alameda as Mrs. Abba L. Holton, but declared it was Boschke's wish, as he did not wish his wife to know that he had ever before formed any alliance. The name Mrs. A. L. Astor, she said, was adopted "for convenience."

Her work as a clairvoyant was shown in a diary for the year 1898 filled with notes of "patients" who called upon her, and fees extracted from them.

Letters written by Boschke to members of his family refer to her as a person that had invested in some of his patents, notably a dredger he was building, and a good friend who had helped him out in many ways, but do not mention her as a daughter, though his will does.

Something of her materialistic nature was told by witnesses, Reinhold Hesse, who was connected with Boschke's enterprises, testifying that he had seen Mr. Astor present a revolver at the head of Boschke and say: "You do it, or here's something that will do you." Hesse also said Mrs. Astor had stolen papers from his desk, and had once tried to stab him with a dagger. Other witnesses testified that her reputation is bad and that she had exerted great influence, always with damaging results, in the affairs of the companies promoting Boschke's enterprises. The case will be resumed Thursday.

Link: <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SM19100504.1.6>

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BOSCHKE PATENTS WORTH A MILLION

Son of Distinguished Engineer Would Save Them From Incompetent Handling

OAKLAND, May 5. — It is to make valuable the inventions of the late Albert Boschke, once an expert and distinguished civil engineer, and to keep them from becoming worthless in incompetent hands that the contest is being waged over his estate, according to his son George, who occupied the witness stand today in Judge Wells' court.

George Boschke said that \$1,000,000 could easily be realized from his father's inventions, which are chiefly concerned with dredger improvements. But he does not consider Dr. Abby L. Astor, who says she is the late engineer's daughter, competent to handle the estate. He has asked the court to appoint Thomas Ramsden, who is chief clerk of Chief Engineer Hood of the Southern Pacific company. George Boschke himself is chief engineer of the Oregon railway and navigation company.

A number of his friends, he testified, and many of them railroadmen, had invested in the Boschke dredging company, and he felt confident that they would lose their money if Doctor Astor were permitted to remain as executrix of the will together with Attorney H. W. Hutton.

The older Boschke was 85 years old when he died. His will recognized Doctor Astor as his daughter and made her executrix with Hutton. George Boschke said today that Doctor Astor was in no way related to him or his father. His sister, Mrs. Minnie Bergmann, and his two brothers, Benjamin F. and Albert Boschke, support him in this. George Boschke said today that he first met Mrs. Astor in his father's office in 1888. She was his clerk then and went by the name of Abby L. Holton. Later she became secretary of the dredging company under the name of Astor.

The case was continued at the close of today's hearing for a week, when further testimony will be heard.

Persistent Link: <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SFC19100506.2.63.1>

BOSCHKE HEIRS LOSE FIGHT WITH WOMAN

Dr. A. L. Astor Succeeds in Contest Over Appointment Under Engineer's Will

OAKLAND, June 10. — Mrs. A. L. Astor, whose assertion that she is a daughter of the late Albert Boschke is contradicted by his children, was successful over them today in Judge Wells' court so far as qualifying as executrix of his will in spite of their opposition. Attorney H. W. Hutton of San Francisco will serve as executor with her. Both were named by Boschke in his will. The estate left by Boschke, who was a pioneer civil engineer, consists almost entirely of patent rights and stock in companies organized to build and operate dredgers that make use of some of Boschke's inventions. His son, Albert Boschke, who is chief engineer of the Oregon railway and navigation company, said that it would be worth more than a million if properly handled, but that in Doctor Astor's hands it would become worthless. Doctor Astor testified that she was the old engineer's daughter, but she could remember little of her youth. and did not know who her mother was. Judge Wells held, however, that the fact of her paternity was not material, as Boschke had appointed her by his will. A contest on the ground of undue influence will be necessary to remove her or break the will, which provides that, any one contesting it shall get only \$3.

LINK: <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SFC19100611.2.43.12>

LOCAL NEWS

South Bay History: The Islands of L.A. Harbor – Smith’s Island and Mormon Island



Both “islands” are attached to the mainland in this aerial view of San Pedro Harbor from 1921. Smith’s Island is at lower left, a still-underdeveloped Mormon Island at center left, and Terminal Island at right. (Credit: Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection, Security Pacific National Bank)



By **SAM GNERRE** | samgnerre1@gmail.com | Daily Breeze

UPDATED: August 20, 2019 at 12:10 PM PDT

Smith’s Island and Mormon Island both lie in the inner harbor of the Port of Los Angeles.

Except they’re not really islands at all. Both are peninsulas that once were free-standing islands before being connected via backfill to the mainland.



Sam Gnerre

They may have lost island status, but both areas are still referred to as such in their names. Both were mostly large sandbars and mud flats that barely rose above the water level and made the interior harbor difficult to navigate.

Mormon Island was the larger of the two, located in the inner harbor not far from Banning's Landing in Wilmington. Most of it was under shallow water; it was estimated that only about one acre of it remained dry at high tide.

There are at least three theories on the origin of the island's name.

In 1846, Joseph Smith, the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, sent a battalion of soldiers to Southern California to help fight the Mexican War.

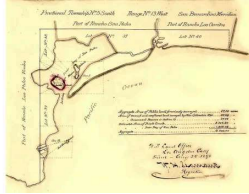
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The Mormon battalion used the desolate San Pedro coastal area to land ships and deliver supplies — lending the church's informal name to the the island as a result. Some unsubstantiated stories also have members of the battalion settling on the desolate island after finishing their military work.

The San Pedro News Pilot claimed, in 1938, the island was named for a Mormon man who had lived there with his son in 1863, though historians have been unable to verify this.



Map circa 1890 shows the two inner islands, Smith's highlighted in purple and Mormon just to its right, behind the unlabeled Rattlesnake Island. Credit: (Materials Testing Library Photograph Collection, Los Angeles Harbor Department Historical Archives)

The late local historian Oliver Vickery proposed a third, also unsubstantiated, theory about a group of Mormon carpenters who had volunteered to work for the Wilmington Drum Barracks during the Civil War and then took up residence on the island.

The Daughters of Utah Pioneers subscribed to Vickery's theory, installing a monument to the Civil War volunteers in 1981 on Fries Avenue, near the entrance to the island and a short distance west of the Banning's Landing Community Center.

The first business occupant of Mormon Island was the Banning Shipyard, built probably in the 1870s, after Banning succeeded in gaining the first harbor improvements.

Mormon Island got turned into a peninsula during the 1913 filling and dredging operations in the harbor. Its transformation from mostly empty mud island to a thriving shipping-related industrial area happened quickly after that, and that's how it remains today.



This undated map illustrates the changes the harbor underwent to become the present day Port of Los Angeles. (Credit: Los Angeles DWP Photo Archives)

Smith's Island, sometimes called Smith Island, was smaller and further south. In the early 1800s, this portion of exposed mudflat — just across the channel from the northern part of San Pedro — became popular with fishermen. They would work on their boats and nets there before putting back out to sea.

One of them, spear fisherman Orin Smith, built the first house on the muddy island, where he lived with his son in the 1860s. The island takes its name from the two men, who hunted sharks for their oil, which was used for lamp fuel.

Smith's name soon would be eclipsed, temporarily, by that of a more prominent resident.

Albert A. Boschke was a Prussian-born engineer and inventor; his work building a better dredging machine drew the attention of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Army Corps gave Boschke a contract to work on dredging the flats near Wilmington, part of Phineas Banning's urging the government to help improve the area so his shipping business could use it as a harbor.

During the project, Boschke became captivated with the area. He moved his family to San Pedro in 1876, staying for a time at a small hotel run by Augustus Timms of Timms Landing fame.

They tired of hotel life, so Boschke moved his wife, Martha, and their children to Smith's Island, probably during the early 1880s. The Boschkes eventually purchased the island.

Martha "Gammy" Boschke became the hub of a burgeoning social scene down on the mudflats, on what became known, for a time, as Boschke's Island (though Smith's Island also appears to have been used by locals). Parties at the Boschke house were described as second only to Banning Mansion galas in terms of size and scope.

In a tragic twist, an exploding gas lamp caused a fire that burned the house to the ground on Oct. 1, 1891. Without a road or bridge to the island, firemen were unable to get their heavy fire wagon across to the island. Martha Boschke's 84-year-old mother, Hanna Fenderson, died in the blaze.

The Boschkes moved to Rattlesnake (now Terminal) Island, and Martha Boschke lived happily there during the flourishing social scene at Brighton Beach, which lasted into the mid-1910s — when it began dying out because of Terminal Island's accelerated industrialization.

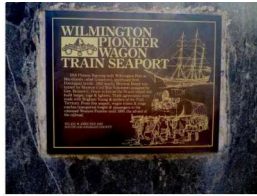


Martha E. Boschke and her family, some members of whom can be seen in this undated photo, lived in this house on Boschke's Island and later on Rattlesnake Island (later Terminal Island) in San Pedro Bay from 1875 to 1928. (Credit: UCLA Photo Archive, Los Angeles Times Photo Collection)

The family's status grew somewhat murky in the 1890s, and Albert moved to the Bay Area around 1900. He died in 1910, at 84 years old. Martha, who remained local, died in 1928 and was buried in Harbor View Cemetery in San Pedro.

The family eventually sold their island to lumber interests for \$15,000, and, reverting to its original name, Smith's Island soon became home base for the Kerckhoff-Cuzner Mill and Lumber Co., a large Standard Oil terminal and the Regan Tool Company.

In 1916, the Harbor Commission asked U.S. engineers for permission to fill in the channel between Smith's Island and the mainland, transforming it into a peninsula. Maps and photos from the 1920s show the island as a peninsula, so it probably was transformed in the late teens.



Monument erected by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers in 1981 in Wilmington describes the Mormon Civil War volunteers. (Oct. 2018 photo by Sam Gnerre)

Sources: Daily Breeze files, "Digging into Harbor History: Albert A. Boschke, The Port's First Dredging Contractor," by Geraldine Knatz, Port of Los Angeles' Portlaarchives blog, Jan. 21, 2014; Los Angeles Times files.; "A Mormon Gateway to the Pacific," by Steve Gilliland, California Pioneer Heritage Foundation website, 2009; Port of Los Angeles: An Illustrated History from 1850 to 1945, by Ernest Marquez and Veronique de Turenne, Angel City Press, 2008; San Pedro News Pilot files.

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 The Trust Project 

2018 > November > 5

Alameda Times Star: 2 articles mention Abba Lord Astor in 1921